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C O N F I D E N T I A L WELLINGTON 000641

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR EAP/ANP AND PM/RSAT

E.O. 12958: DECL: 07/30/2014

TAGS: [PREL](#) [OPDC](#) [MOPS](#) [MARR](#) [IZ](#) [NZ](#)

SUBJECT: NEW ZEALAND PRIME MINISTER AND FOREIGN MINISTER  
MAKE HELPFUL STATEMENTS RE HOSTAGE-TAKING IN IRAQ

REF: STATE 161899

Classified By: Pol/Econ Counselor, Timothy Zuniga-Brown, for reasons 1.  
5 (B/D)

11. (C) Post delivered reftel talking points and statement to the GNZ, but was careful to acknowledge the GNZ's clearly stated position that New Zealand is NOT/NOT a member of the Coalition. New Zealand has consistently indicated that the presence of 61 NZ military engineers in Basra is in fulfillment of its responsibilities as a UN member to UN Security Council resolutions (including 1483).

12. (U) New Zealand Prime Minister Helen Clark implicitly criticized the Philippine government July 27 for withdrawing its contingent from Iraq after one of its citizens was taken hostage. PM Clark told local media July 27 that "if you allow yourself to be pushed around like that, you simply invite hostage-taking." Clark noted that she had consistently told New Zealanders that if they went to Iraq and were kidnapped the GNZ would not help them.

13. (U) NZ Foreign Minister Phil Goff told local media that giving in to hostage-takers' demands only made kidnappings more likely. Goff said he could "understand the angst the Philippine government felt, but it's a matter of long practice and common sense that, when the demands of terrorists are acceded to, then their activities are encouraged, not diminished." He added that if a New Zealander were held hostage, the GNZ would do all it could to negotiate for the hostage's well being but would not bow to terrorist demands. Goff pointed out that "if the consequences are, in saving one life, that it results in the loss of dozens of other lives, then that clearly was not the right decision to take." Goff made similar remarks to the media at a recent joint press event with Australian Foreign Minister Downer.  
Swindells